

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 11677 141755Z
ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: OPPOSITION REACTION TO LEBER'S COMMENTS
ON AWACS

REFS: A. BONN 11521 DTG 121905Z JUL 77
B. BONN 21260 DTG 171714Z DEC 76 (NOTAL)
C. BONN 03618 DTG 281845Z FEB 77 (NOTAL)

1. CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY DAMM WAS REPORTED BY THE JULY
13 EDITION OF THE "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE" TO HAVE
AGREED WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER REGARDING THE FRG'S
CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE AWACS PROJECT. DAMM
INDICATED THAT THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION STILL SUPPORTED
THE PROCUREMENT OF THE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, BEFORE TAKING
A DECISION, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO EXAMINE THE
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PAGE 02 BONN 11677 141755Z

MANUFACTURER'S CLAIMS REGARDING THE SYSTEM'S
CAPABILITIES.

2. ACCORDINGLY, THE OPPOSITION EXPECTED SATISFACTORY
CLARIFICATION OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- THE CAPABILITIES OF THE BOEING E3A, THE GRUMMAN

HAWKEYE AND THE BRITISH NIMROD MUST BE COMPARED WITH ONE ANOTHER THROUGH UNOBJECTIONABLE EUROPEAN EXAMINATIONS. THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS AS WELL AS THEIR MILITARY VALUE FOR NATO MUST BE DETERMINED AND REPORTED ON.

-- THE INTEROPERABILITY OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM WITH THE BRITISH NIMROD MUST BE ASSURED.

-- THE OPPOSITION INSISTS THAT FRANCE PARTICIPATE FINANCIALLY TO AN APPROPRIATE DEGREE IN THE PLAN WHICH MUST BE A NATO PROJECT.

3. FINALLY, ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, THE OPPOSITION DEMANDED THAT THE DECISION IN FAVOR OF AN AMERICAN WEAPON SYSTEM MUST SIMULTANEOUSLY BE THE BEGINNING OF AN AMERICAN-EUROPEAN TWO-WAY STREET IN THE ARMAMENTS AREA. LEBER'S DEMAND THAT THE AMERICANS MUST BUY SOME AIR-BUSSES (REF A), ACCORDING TO DAMM, WAS INSUFFICIENT BECAUSE IT DID NOT CONCERN AN EXCHANGE OF ARMAMENTS. DAMM WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "...IT WAS MUCH MORE NECESSARY FOR THE AMERICANS FINALLY TO BUY EUROPEAN WEAPON SYSTEMS IN A SUBSTANTIAL MANNER."

4. COMMENT: CDU/CSU SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE AWACS PROGRAM IS NOTHING NEW. REGARDING THE FIRST OF DAMM'S THREE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BONN 11677 141755Z

POINTS IN PARA 2 ABOVE, THE OPPOSITION HAD PREVIOUSLY TAKEN THE POSITION THAT OTHER AVAILABLE RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED (REF B). POINTS TWO AND THREE, HOWEVER, APPEAR TO BE NEW, AND THE THIRD ONE IN PARTICULAR -- FRENCH FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT -- MAY BE A DIFFICULT CONDITION FOR THE ALLIANCE TO FULFILL. THE EMBASSY IS NOT NOW ABLE TO JUDGE HOW HARD THE CDU/CSU'S POSITION ON THIS POINT IS.

THE OPPOSITION HAS MADE KNOWN ITS DISPLEASURE ABOUT PAST U.S. ACTIONS IN THE STANDARDIZATION AREA AND HAS THREATENED TO VOTE AGAINST FURTHER PURCHASES OF U.S. WEAPON SYSTEMS (REF C). DAMM HIMSELF WAS PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN THE XM-1/ LEOPARD DISPUTE. HIS INSISTENCE THAT EUROPEAN PURCHASE OF AWACS BE RECIPROCATED BY AMERICAN PURCHASE OF EUROPEAN WEAPON SYSTEMS IS LIKELY TO REMAIN A KEY ELEMENT IN CDU/CSU THINKING AND MAY BECOME THE DECISIVE FACTOR IN THE OPPOSITION'S DECISION ULTIMATELY TO VOTE FUNDS FOR AWACS.

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